

LABOUR MONTHLY

Founded 1921 Editor: R. Palme Dutt

Centenary TUC Special

BATTLEGROUND BLACKPOOL – WAGES – DONOVAN REPORT

**Palme Dutt
R. Briginshaw
R. Page Arnot**

FULTON & THE CIVIL SERVICE

Stanley Mayne

**Economic Outlook
Red Light in Laos
Playwrights & S. Africa
'Election '70'**

**John Eaton
Cdr. E. P. Young
David Mercer
Stuart Douglass**

SEPTEMBER 1968

2s. 6d.

Special Announcement

THIS year wildly rising costs of production have hit our magazine particularly hard.

Every independent periodical which is not maintained by subsidies, whether open subsidies of a wealthy backer, publisher or organisation, or the thinly veiled subsidies of lavish wealthy advertisers, is similarly hit.

It is only necessary to examine current publishers' lists to see the fantastic spiralling prices of current commercial publications, with 90-page booklets priced at 15s. (see our last month's 'Publications Received').

Despite the precious support of our readers (always publicly acknowledged in respect of every donation), and the maintenance of the premier circulation of any comparable monthly periodical in the labour movement, we are now losing money.

We cannot afford to lose money. We have no fairy godmother to pay our deficits. We have to pay our way or go under.

Therefore we are very reluctantly compelled to raise our price. From next month's issue in October the price will be 3s. 6d.

This is a matter of great regret to us, for we are deeply conscious that many of our readers, too, are suffering financial hardship. That is why we postponed this rise and maintained the old uneconomic price until soaring costs of paper and printing etc. made the change absolutely unavoidable.

We know the burden this will mean for many of our most valued readers. To help in this respect we are offering a specially favourable post-free subscription rate, and for students a reduced subscription rate. See inside back cover for details.

In these difficult conditions we ask our readers:

(1) to give the greatest possible support to our Fund which during this year has averaged £80 a month, and which we would like to see increased to £100. We have taken the risk of including a figure of anticipated donations in calculating our economic price. The Fund is more essential than ever.

(2) to help to increase our circulation, by making our journal known to new readers, especially the many young people now coming into political activity, and among industrial and professional workers; to suggest joint subscriptions where the price is difficult; to get it into public libraries and reading rooms. If you will send us the name and address of a potential reader we will send a free specimen copy.

For 47 years the loyalty and understanding of our readers has sustained us. We have been proud to keep the flag flying. We need your support more than ever now, when the future for our journal is alive with opportunities.

Help us to keep the flag flying for the next half century.

EDITORIAL BOARD

LABOUR MONTHLY

Editor: R. Palme Dutt Associate Editor: R. Page Arnot
Managing Editor: Roger Woddis

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Notes of the Month

CENTENARY TUC

'The Annual Trades Union Congress is still the ultimate authority on policy.'

GEORGE WOODCOCK 'A Hundred Years of Trade Unionism',
BBC broadcast, *Listener*, June 13, 1968.

August 19, 1968

This Centenary TUC finds its justified celebration of a century of achievement overshadowed by the new urgent problems of the present. Trade unionists today are finding that the party and the Government which they united with the socialists to establish as their instrument against big capital is now acting as the instrument of big capital against them. The trade unions have fought to end unemployment. The Government is promoting unemployment. The trade unions have fought to increase wages. The Government has adopted legal powers to curb increases in wages. The trade unions exist to fight for the workers' interests at the expense of profits. The Government, while curbing wage increases, has sent profits and share prices soaring to record heights. No wonder this Centenary TUC will prove, not so much a celebration of the past, as a field of battle of the present.

TUC as Organ of Revolt

Let it never be forgotten that the TUC was founded as an organ of revolt, from below, by the Manchester Trades Council's initiative in convening it, that is, by the rank and file, against the frowns of the ruling 'Junta' representing the dominant national right-wing trade union leadership.

The Congress did not spring into existence without opposition, as some members of the Junta, which previously had been regarded as the Cabinet of the Labour movement, looked askance at the new effort of the Trades Councils, and thought they were attempting to usurp the executive authority of the amalgamated trades.

W. J. Davis, General Secretary of the Brassworkers and Metal Mechanics,
'The British Trades Union Congress: History and Recollections',
published by the TUC, 1910

Of the 34 delegates at that first Congress the majority came from 11 local Trades Councils. The TUC was the first mass labour organisation to carry a resolution already in 1893, following the upsurge of socialism and the new unionism, calling on the unions to support for labour representation in parliament only candidates pledged to 'the collective ownership and control of the means of production, distribution and exchange.' This resolution for complete nationalisation, in face of the opposition of the right-wing Parliamentary Committee, was carried again by the Congress majority in 1894—years before the Labour Party had been brought into existence by the alliance of the unions and the socialists, and twenty-four years before the backward Labour Party, spurred by the victory of the October Revolution, at last in 1918 adopted formally the aim of common ownership.

Arena of Battle

In face of this victory of socialism and the left in the broadest representative assembly of the organised workers in Britain, already in the last decade of the last century, three quarters of a century before the present day, the right-wing leadership dominating the old Parliamentary Committee struck back in 1895 to maintain their domination by changing the rules. In 1895 the Parliamentary Committee, without submitting their proposals to Congress, and even on the Committee only carrying them by the casting vote of the Chairman, adopted new Standing Orders which they enforced on the representation of the Congress that year before it could meet to have a say: (1) to exclude the Trades Councils, which had been the founders of the Congress and were the voice of the local rank and file; (2) to confine representation to officials and those working at their trade, that is, to exclude the hated socialist working-class agitators, like Keir Hardie, who had left the mines or industry to give full-time service to the working class in the fight for socialism; (3) to substitute for the free vote of delegates according to opinions and the debate the 'card vote' by which an official could register in a single block the number of the entire membership of his union without any obligation to ensure the prior consultation of the membership on the issue or guarantee that that vote represented their view, and with the exclusion of minorities in this 'block vote.' By these means the leftward swing of the organised working class was held in check, and the right-wing domination of the Parliamentary

Committee, subsequently General Council, maintained so far to the present day. But today a new situation is being reached in which even this technique, initially devised by reaction to check the advance of the workers and stifle the left, is beginning to operate the other way. Far-reaching changes in some of the largest unions, reflecting the democratic pressure of the members, and affecting the direction of their block votes, are bringing a shift in the balance and opening up new possibilities and a new perspective, if the full strength of these advancing forces is exercised at this crucial Congress.

Ebb and Flow

The tide of working-class advance cannot be indefinitely held back, however elaborate the mechanism of obstacles and restraint, in the modern era of deepening capitalist crisis. Throughout this era the upsurge from below has again and again swept past the obstacles, made breaches in the system of restraint, and compelled actions never initially contemplated by the reactionary leadership. The militant upsurge before the first world war. The Triple Alliance. The Councils of Action. Red Friday. The General Strike. Each time the advance has been followed by the counter-thrust to restore the old order and fasten new fetters of restraint. After the betrayal of the general strike the most extreme attempt yet was made to batten down all the hatches and impose Mondism or the alliance with the biggest employers in the hope to establish permanent industrial passivity and class co-operation.

How the Wage Freeze was Defeated

These policies were carried to an even more extreme stage with the offensive of the Attlee-Bevin-Cripps Government to impose austerity and the wage freeze. But each time the resistance has arisen anew from the industrial working class and found expression through the unions. The battle against the Labour Government's wage freeze registered already in 1948 the support of over two millions at the Conference of Executives against five and a half millions for the Government's policy. By the beginning of 1950 those two millions had swollen to over three and a half millions, and the General Council's support of the Labour Government's wage freeze policy was only carried by a majority of a little over

half a million. By September, 1950, the Trades Union Congress rejected the Government's wage freeze policy and carried by 3,949,000 to 3,727,000 a resolution opposing 'any further policy of wage restraint.' Today this same battle is reaching to a new and higher level, as the Fourth Labour Government of Wilson, Jenkins, Crossman and Barbara Castle is repeating the fatal path of the Third Labour Government of Attlee, Bevin and Cripps which brought such disastrous consequences for the Labour Party and thirteen years in the electoral wilderness.

Climax of a Century of Struggle

History never repeats itself in the same form. In a much deeper stage of the crisis of capitalism, with a weakened Britain, the Fourth Labour Government of Wilson is trying to repeat the worst errors of the Third Labour Government of Attlee, to flutter still the tattered flag of Britain's role as a world power, to brandish still the now third-category nuclear bomb, to increase military expenditure year by year to a peacetime record, to keep Britain tied to the United States and the international bankers, and on this basis to deliver offensive after offensive against the standards of consumption of the people, restrict wages and wage increases, and adopt special powers against the unions and strikes. The consequent Labour electoral slump has gone far deeper than in the era of Attlee. But the resistance of the workers which has found expression through the unions has reached a markedly higher level and is bringing a new balance of forces. The crucial opportunity and testing for this new balance of forces in the unions to find effective expression and influence the future in the labour movement is due at the Blackpool TUC.

Not Amurath an Amurath Succeeds

Previously, whatever the tide of left opinion within the unions or among Labour Party members, the sledgehammer of a Bevin could always be counted on to deliver the powerful block vote of the Transport Workers on the side of Attlee and right-wing policy and to batter down left revolt. After Bevin the same role was continued by the less violently rumbustious, but no less reactionary Deakin. But now the voice of the General Secretary of the Transport Workers, more numerous than ever, is no longer a Bevin or a

Deakin, but Frank Cousins, who resigned from the Wilson Government in opposition to its incomes policy. At the same time the previous anti-democratic regulation imposed on the Transport Workers by the Bevin-Deakin regime, to debar Communists from their democratic right of election as delegates or officials, has been rescinded. No longer a Carron speaks for the Engineers, but in his place Hugh Scanlon has been elected by the ballot of the members after a keenly fought contest. This is not a question of individuals or subjective estimates of individuals. It is a question of a shift in the balance of forces within the unions concerned, reflecting the movement of opinion within the working class. It is a reflection of long and patient work from below, of co-operation of all militants, in industry and in the workshops, as well as through the often cumbersome union machinery.

Professional Workers in the Vanguard

At the same time the professional workers and technicians, the 'white collar workers,' who used in the majority of cases to hesitate to associate their organisations with the trade unions of the industrial workers, are now advancing to a new stage. They are not only making giant strides in their professional organisation and in winning recognition for their organisations on an independent trade union basis. They are also, at the same time as their vital role and weight in modern industry and production is visibly growing every year, increasingly developing their links with the unions of the industrial workers and exercising an influential and progressive vanguard role in the united trade union movement, including in the TUC. All these are signs of the advance of new forces, which may not yet reach full fruition at Blackpool, but which are pointing the way to the future for the labour movement.

Two Policies—Two Camps

The battle which is now gathering, and which will reach a high point at Blackpool, cannot be side-stepped. It cannot be hushed up or patched up by mutual back-slapping of big chiefs. The issue is not an issue of personalities, but a basic issue of opposing policies. Harold Wilson, Richard Crossman and Barbara Castle are not devils with horns and tails, desiring out of the wickedness of their

hearts to do in the workers, impose prescription charges on the sick, send unemployment mounting to a prospective three quarters of a million, or threaten strikers with penal sanctions. On the contrary, they would be only too happy, if they could, to pour out bounty to all the workers and carry through ever more generous social reforms, amid universal applause and soaring popularity in the polls. But they are prisoners of the political and economic system they have chosen, just as Ramsay MacDonald was, and just as Attlee was. Having resolutely turned their faces against Marx, whose scientific analysis of the workings of capitalism they believe to be obsolete, their heads are stuffed with the phoney economics of the capitalist sophisters taught at the universities. Believing all the jargon of the technocratic whizz-kids, they imagined that they could run capitalism more efficiently than the capitalists, and that out of the marvels of the technological revolution, whose coming benefits were being preached by all the prophets of capitalism, they would be able to guarantee permanent prosperity, full employment and ever rising standards and social services without any pains or burdens or need for increased taxation. Such was their joyous election programme in 1964.

Cruel Awakening

Having come into office they discovered, as Ramsay MacDonald had done before them, as Attlee had done, as the would-be ultra-leftist socialist Cripps had done, that the laws of capitalism set them very different tasks to perform; that the laws of capitalism were not at all as they imagined, but as Marx had analysed; and that these laws set them the tasks to deliver successive offensives to restrict consumption, curb wage increases, promote unemployment, raise moneylenders' interest rates to crushing levels, and take legal powers against the unions and strikes. So they broke their election pledges into fragments amid the execration of the electorate. But these policies are not their personal invention. They are simply the normal policies of finance-capital, for which they are acting as the front spokesmen, the patter merchants, the barkers. That is why the fight against these policies is not a question of personalities. It is a class fight. It is the fight of the working class against capitalism. And the immediate battleground of that fight is the deceitfully termed 'incomes policy,' on which the Blackpool Congress will have to pronounce.

Productivity Confidence Trick

In vain the attempt is made to dress up the ancient battle of profits versus wages in some supposedly new garb to gull the innocent. The old Ministry of Labour, which was founded to check strikes, promote class peace, assist the employers and diddle the unions, is dubbed anew the 'Ministry of Employment and Productivity' (report has it that immediately after the change a zealous regional officer sent an urgent report to the new Ministry in London, only to receive it back from the post office with the intimation 'address unknown,' but eventually research revealed that the address was the address of the Ministry of Labour). Barbara Castle uses all her powers of blarney to explain that it is a wicked illusion to imagine that she is trying to prevent wage increases, when she issues an order banning with legal threats the payment of a wage increase agreed between employers and workers; what she is really trying to do is to increase wages on the basis of increased productivity. An old story, and the familiar gag of the employers in every negotiation. Barbara may not remember, as it was rather before her time, the former Leader of the Labour Party, J. R. Clynes. Clynes was Leader of the Labour Party at the end of the first world war. On every hoarding in the country there appeared in gigantic letters: 'THE GATE TO MORE—PRODUCE MORE' with the signature of J. R. Clynes. The workers duly put their backs into it and produced more, with such success that they worked themselves into the mass unemployment which became established in the winter of 1920 and was not lifted until only the war broke it in 1940. By 1922 Clynes was bitterly complaining:

The sacrifices which the workers have had to endure have not hastened the trade revival which cheaper labour was said to guarantee.

(J. R. Clynes, speaking at the National Federation of General Workers' Conference at Leamington, August 17, 1922)

The laws of capitalism are not changed by glib tongues. The disillusioned Labour Party got rid of Clynes, and set up as Leader in his place to represent the victory of the left, with the support of the 'Red Clydeside'—Ramsay MacDonald, to repeat the old story. Proving that it is not a question of individuals, but of class politics, and of the indispensable necessity of a class political organisation, based on Marxism, within the broad labour movement if the labour movement is to conquer.

Blackpool TUC—Opportunity and Responsibility

A high responsibility rests on the delegates to the Blackpool TUC. The union conferences which have preceded it have shown the way feeling is running among the workers. George Woodcock in his centenary broadcast spoke of the Congress as 'still the ultimate authority on policy.' But at other times he has adopted a very different tone, decrying Congress as a mere debating assembly, unsuitable for taking decisions, and looking for some alternative in the Conference of Executives, emphasising the greater importance of the General Council as a continuous body in close contact with the Government and departmental officials, or toying with ideas of the necessity for some more centralised reorganisation of the existing trade union structure. Similar language is used nowadays by Government Ministers, who deny the sovereignty of the Labour Party Conference, repudiate the demand to carry out its decisions as a violation of the sacred principles of Burke and the Constitution, and proclaim the divine right of independence of parliamentarians from any control by the working-class organisations which put them where they are. This anxiety to downgrade the broadest delegate conferences of the organised workers, where previously their supreme authority was taken for granted without question by the top leadership as their justification for dragooning the left, is a revealing sign of the times. It is a sign of their fear, fear of the workers, fear of the way the mood of the workers is moving.

Test of Blackpool

For this reason all the more importance should be attached to these Conferences, however much their rulings are defied. They are the most favourable existing opportunity, whatever the limitations, for the democratic expression of the will of the organised workers. And in the end the unions have the strength, also in respect of the political labour movement. This not merely in the obvious financial sense of the dependence of the Labour Party on them, but in the deeper political sense. Without the unions, representing the loyalty of class solidarity, the Labour Party top leadership would be nothing but a bunch of obsolete Asquithians withering away like the old Liberal Party. Let the unions use their strength. There is now a sizeable gathering of progressive forces within the unions reaching to the levels of effective representation. It is for the delegates to Blackpool to use their strength to carry the progressive decisions on policy

which are so imperatively needed, and which can prove of vital importance, not only for the future of the trade union movement, but also for their bearing on the Labour Party Conference in October.

Postscript

Readers will have seen the announcement (on inside cover) of a coming increase in price next month. A hard blow. Old friends who have taken part in our battles over many decades will recognise the price of independence which we have succeeded in maintaining solely by the support and loyalty of readers for close on half a century, when so many periodicals with more finance have gone under. But for new readers, and especially for all the young people now coming into political life, whose stirring is one of the most welcome signs of the times, and to whom the role and record of our journal is unknown, a word of explanation may be worth while. Nowadays we are constantly receiving letters from our sellers that for many of these most valued potential new readers the very name *Labour Monthly* arouses instant aversion and refusal, because they imagine it to mean an organ of the hated policies of the Wilson Government and Transport House, and so they fail to look further to discover that the contents are discussing all the burning current questions with which they are concerned, and that our organ is a fighting organ, as it has always been, against the reactionary policies they hate and for the militant new policies which are necessary. When our journal was founded there were no bans or proscriptions yet in the labour movement. Communists, socialists and militant trade unionists had equal rights, both in the industrial and in the political movement. Our journal was founded from the outset as an organ of the broadest unity of all these sections in the common fight for the aims and interests of the working-class movement and socialism, against all policies of surrender to capitalism. While opening our pages to a wide array of representative spokesmen, we have always sought to review all issues in the sharp light of Marxist analysis. We refused to allow the proud old name of Labour to become the monopoly of those who were betraying it. Bernard Shaw wrote on our twentieth anniversary:

‘When the Plan of Campaign for Labour killed the Socialist revival of the eighties, to which I belonged, the *Labour Monthly* stepped in and kept the red flag flying whilst the Labour Party was waving a tattered old Union Jack.’

We have welcomed as our contributors in earlier years such representatives of literature as Bernard Shaw, H. G. Wells or Henri Barbusse; of varied schools of socialist thought, like Laski or Brailsford or G. D. H. Cole, alongside Marxists; almost all the best known leaders and fighters of trade unionism (even Citrine before he moved to the right); leaders of the national liberation movement like Jawaharlal Nehru, Dr. Azikwe or Cheddi Jagan. Today in our Arts Section we are happy to welcome the contributions of the new progressive writers and artists who have come forward in the present period, like Jeremy Sandford or Nell Dunn or John Berger. On the basis of our range of writers, our fidelity to Marxism, and our consistent championship of every working class struggle and voicing of every revolt against oppression either of classes or of peoples our journal has attained, to an extent that can rarely be paralleled by socialist or labour papers over the past fifty years, an international circulation, not only in all English-speaking countries, but also in every continent except Antarctica. This confidence of our readers has sustained us, and will, we hope, continue to sustain us. To help newcomers over what may seem to them in the present political situation the stumbling block of our title we are considering a fresh designing of our cover to convey our role as an organ of left unity. But we take our stand with Marx when he prophesied in his Address of the General Council of the First International in 1870 on the occasion of the outbreak of the Franco-German war:

A new society is springing up whose international role will be *Peace*, because its national ruler will be everywhere the same—*Labour!*

Speed the day—and the day is indeed speeding forward.

R.P.D.

KWAME NKRUMAH

has written for *Labour Monthly* an important article on 'The Myth of the Third World'. This will appear in the October *LM*.

INTOLERABLE

Richard Briginshaw

Joint General Secretary of the Society of Graphic and Allied Trades*

I THINK the experience of the last three years has increasingly shown the fallacy of attempting to help lower paid workers by endeavouring to hold back those in receipt of higher pay. There never was a satisfactory answer given as to how the frozen wages of higher paid workers were to be distributed to the lower paid. The earlier demagogy of George Brown in this connection finally fell into a hash. It is plain for all to see now that the advanced sections of wage earners in this country need to press on to find ways and means of increasing their wages and in so doing they will give leadership and help and give assistance to lower paid workers.

Within our present social context this is the only way. So many of us helped the Labour Party to get sufficient votes to form a government. We were so anxious to be rid of 13 years of Tory misrule. We offered service, then we acquiesced, then we tolerated—now the situation, in my view, is becoming intolerable, with the expressed determination of the Government to go through with further legislation to obtain compulsory powers to hold down wages. They say prices as well, but our experience in this regard should teach us the truth of this proposal.

The Tory Prime Minister for the most part of *those* 13 wasted years, Harold Macmillan, sought a desperate way out of his mess by abjectly seeking an almost unconditional entry into the EEC. Later, after more wasted years, a similar act of desperation was performed by Harold Wilson; both efforts doomed to failure. The solution to Britain's economic and financial problems will never be found in a narrow combination. The Tories now yell that there is too much socialism. This is clearly not the case. If there is too much of anything, it is that there is too much 'yellowism' on the part of the present Government in facing up to the real issues before them in this country and internationally.

The Government has been consistently wrong in economic and financial calculations—it continues to base its policies on wrong calculations. We must therefore strongly struggle against the new

* We have pleasure in reprinting with the author's permission this article, which may not have been seen by readers who are not members of the union, from the union journal of SOGAT.

proposed compulsory impositions on wage earners and their incomes. No one is really caught by those proposed restrictions on dividends. They are held up for a year or two, but they are put back into the till for later distribution. But everyone knows that when workers lose way with regard to wages, their living standards fall because they are always running to try to catch up with the rising prices and cost of living.

Of course we would have always preferred stability, but this is not in prospect even if wage earners were to stand completely still for any given period of time. Such a standstill will only be taken advantage of and anything accruing from it will be wasted by the State or pocketed by capitalist entrepreneurs.

I do not believe Barbara Castle will effectively control prices. I do believe the present Government spokesmen, including the Prime Minister, in openly saying that they propose to reduce the standard of living of our people in this country.

I do not agree that this is the way to solve our problems in this country.

The officers of this Society are definitely under instruction to seek to resist the reductions in the standard of living of the people they represent, and if in the end the members require it and officers are fined, I think they are getting into the frame of mind that they would rather go to prison than pay fines imposed under the suggested powers. If it is, as Barbara Castle says, a fallacy that people will be sent to prison, and I think no one is particularly anxious to get there, tens of thousands of our members would immediately object if any attempt was made to constrain on our goods.

Ian Mikardo, MP, is supposed to have said in a Committee stage in the House of Commons that there would be no aircraft leaving London Airport if he were sent to prison in pursuance of trade union duties. I think it would be possible that there would be no newspapers or printing in this country if things really got going and the property, such as it is, of the poor trade union officials was constrained in view of unpaid fines.

So all concerned had better get it right at the beginning. I am not sure what George Woodcock is talking about when he says that the match has not started, but these are the kind of things that so many of us are thinking about at the present moment. I do not believe that the process of compulsion sought by the Government at this time will be ended in 18 months' time by the voluntary action of this Government or its successor. I believe only the activity of

our people will demand this of government. I do believe that Government actions are undermining TUC efforts to establish an effective general staff for the trade union movement in this country. I think that in this centennial year of the TUC this was the original idea and it has been pursued at various stages throughout the whole of that 100 years, and it is right that it should be so.

If members have misgivings with regard to TUC leadership and policies, that is something that they can deal with and influence, but it is wrong to stop the pursuance of what will ultimately be necessary if the 9,000,000 affiliates of the TUC are to really become decisively effective. Governments come and go, but our job in the trade unions will, of necessity, go on. The Government of the day by its present policies is bedevilling the long term necessities for our movement. Compulsion and voluntary procedures, however slow they may be to develop, are contradictions and both cannot live together. The Government should drop its intended legislation as a gesture of an eleventh hour turn in policy that may save it from its coming defeat. I share the view expressed by Emmanuel Shinwell in the House of Commons recently that the labour movement is more important than a Labour Government.

I think it is too late for this Government to be diverted from its self-killing, but the officials of this Society are fairly clearly directed by the Executive and Conference to see that we are not brought down with it.

LABOUR MONTHLY

FORTY YEARS AGO

TUC and Class Co-operation

The 1928 Conference at Swansea will be the most important in the history of the British Trade Union Movement, and will determine the future outlook of those who claim to be the industrial leaders of the trade unions, as represented by the General Council. The main proposals arising from the negotiations with the Mond Group of employers, if accepted, must change both the objective and the structure of trade unionism from instruments of struggle on behalf of the working class, to mediums for collaboration and co-operation with the capitalist employing class. The proposals recommended by a majority of the General Council pre-suppose that capitalism can be reformed and readjusted in the interests of the workers in industry. They have revived the old co-partnership, profit-sharing cry, and are a definite declaration in support of the principles inherent in these proposals that have always been opposed by the trade union movement.

(From 'The Issues Before the Swansea TUC', by A. J. Cook,
Labour Monthly, September 1928.)

DONOVAN ON TRADE UNION LAW

R. Page Arnot

THE first Trade Union Congress in 1868 discussed the first Royal Commission on Trade Unions, made up of 'lawyers, landed proprietors and manufacturers' according to the delegate who denounced them as not 'worthy of the confidence of trade unionists.' Following the Centenary banquet, graced by the Queen's presence, Congress discusses the fifth Royal Commission on Trade Unions.¹ What will be the verdict this time? Today, two of the 'top brass' of the trade union movement, the Rt. Hon. George Woodcock and Lord Collison, CBE, are appointed to sit together with 'lawyers, banking proprietors, industrialists' and others. Then, the trade unions were still apprehensive of prosecution under the criminal law. This time it is only the lower officials, the 175,000 shop stewards constituting 'the main link between unions and their members,' who are not represented directly on the Commission, and who may have reason to be apprehensive of actions launched under civil law.

Whether the Congress with its crowded agenda can give to the Donovan Report full and adequate consideration without preliminary discussion in every responsible local and district and national organisation, or whether there will be a special Trades Union Congress has still to be seen. But such a discussion would have to go fast if the gathered wisdom of the whole movement is to be available before the Government takes an irrevocable step in the next session of Parliament. Already on Monday, August 5, the leaders of the Trades Union Congress were lunching, for the third time in a month, with the leaders of the Confederation of British Industry, and having 'exploratory talks' on the setting up of a Commission for Industrial Relations and on 'the development of comprehensive plant bargaining.' So there is no time to lose.

Clearly, as was mentioned in the House of Commons debate on July 16 by one former general secretary, this Donovan Report has not come up to expectations. Out of the 330 problems in their initial survey of the field of inquiry, the answers on some of the most fundamental are extremely perfunctory and jejune. The Commission's preoccupation with urgent matters has narrowed its scope but at the

¹ Royal Commission on Trade Unions and Employers' Associations 1965-1968. Chairman: The Rt. Hon. Lord Donovan. Cmnd. 3623, HM Stationery Office, £1 net.

same time concentrated it upon questions of Government policy, accepted as correct.² Apparently it is the duty of the Royal Commission to accept Incomes and Prices policy and not to busy itself overmuch with considerations which might assist in working out any changes in that policy. But the Commission's work had to be done also 'with particular reference to the Law affecting the activities of these bodies.' Consequently the Report recommends a dozen or so changes in the statutes of the last 100 years. Eight of these proposed changes are in the Trades Disputes Act of 1906, the sheet-anchor of British trade unionism.

When in the opening year of this century on July 22, 1901, the House of Lords uttered their Taff Vale Judgment (the Taff Vale Railway Company v. the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants), that a trade union could be sued for damages caused or alleged to have been caused by its officers (e.g. in a strike) and that an injunction could be granted to restrain it not merely from criminal but also from other 'unlawful' acts, it was a crippling blow. The right to strike was virtually taken away. The enemies of trade unionism rejoiced, amongst them that employers' federation which preceded the present Confederation of British Industry. Trade unions were thrust back into the position of over thirty years earlier, and left naked to their enemies.³

A great agitation began. The trade unions turned to politics. Many joined the new Labour Representation Committee (from 1906 onwards called the Labour Party) until the number of affiliated trade unions rose from two score to 65 in 1901-2 and leaped up to 127 in 1902-3 and 165 in 1903-4. The harsh Taff Vale Judgment and the agitation against it had created the Labour Party; and the number of its MPs rose from two in the 1900 General Election to 29 in that of January 1906. Liberal and Tory members had moreover, given election pledges to restore the law to what it had been (or was believed to have been) from 1871 to 1901. The Government yielded to working-class pressure. The Trade Disputes Act was won, becoming law on December 20, 1906. The Taff Vale Judgment was reversed. Trade unions were liberated from the law's oppression. The Donovan Report says of the Act that 'It exempted trade unions

² See (in the August issue of *Labour Monthly*) *The Royal Commission*, by R. Page Arnot.

³ The Webbs stated that the grievance of the trade unions and the 'serious danger' to their continued usefulness and improvement lay in the uncertainty of the English law and 'its liability to be used as a means of oppression': that this danger was increased and this grievance aggravated by 'the dislike of trade unionism and strikes which nearly all judges and juries share with the rest of the upper and middle classes.' (*Industrial Democracy*, 1902 Edition.)

altogether from liability to be sued in tort and gave a measure of protection from civil suit for certain acts done in contemplation or furtherance of a trade dispute.'

It is this Trade Disputes Act 1906, this charter of trade unionism, to which the Donovan Report puts forward a series of amendments. Some of these amendments are harmless, the product of the tidy legal mind, and a few could be beneficial. But the most important are directed to the famous sections 3 and 4, against which most lawyers and nearly all employers have unceasingly intrigued and agitated ever since 1906.

Now men and women who give up their daily income and cease work 'because of a principle,' to use the words of the women machinists at Fords in Dagenham this summer, are protected whether or not their stoppage has been authorised by any trade union executive (i.e. whether the strike is 'official' or 'unofficial')—and indeed whether or not they are members of any trade union—by the Act of 1906. The famous section 3 provides that:

An act done by a person in contemplation or furtherance of a trade dispute shall not be actionable on the ground only that it induces some other person to break a contract of employment or that it is an interference with the trade business or employment of some other person or with the right of some other person to dispose of his capital or his labour as he wills.

The Donovan Report, while making it clear that strikes are fewer in Britain than in the USA and most other comparable countries, draws a distinction between the 5 per cent of them that are 'official' and the 95 per cent that are 'unofficial,' 'unconstitutional,' 'unpredictable.' The latter grouping seems particularly unpopular amongst the members of the Royal Commission, who are mostly 'upper or middle class.' Their proposal, by a majority, is that the protection afforded in section 3 should be confined to trade unions (while trade unions themselves are to be more closely defined in future) so that those taking part in an 'unofficial' strike (described as an 'evil') in future become 'civilly liable for conspiracy, for inducing a breach of contract and for intimidation.'

This recommendation to 'amend' the Trades Disputes Act puts the clock back with a vengeance—back to the Taff Vale Judgment.

But such a proposal, it might be thought, was bound to have a very limited area of operations affecting only something abnormal or unusual in the way of work stoppages; and such an impression might appear to be borne out by the 'throw-away-line' manner in which this proposition of the majority is tabled. Actually, as appears

from another section of the Report, this proposal would apply to each and every strike (with the exception of a tiny minority) that occurs in Britain today or has occurred in these last few years. In their own words this is made perfectly clear, for example in the following paragraphs giving figures:

362. International Comparisons on Statistics, showing days lost per thousand employees to be less on a three year's average in the United Kingdom than in Belgium, Denmark, France, Japan, and New Zealand, and far less than in the USA, Canada, Australia, Italy and the Republic of Ireland.

367. Table, given by the Ministry of Labour of average annual figures 1964-1966 for 'Official, Unofficial and other stoppages of work due to industrial disputes' which shows that out of 2,272 stoppages, there were 74 official strikes, 2,171 unofficial strikes, others (unclassified) 25 and 2 partly-official strikes.

From these figures it is clear that less than 4 per cent are official strikes, the only ones to be exempted from the Donovan Report proposals, the only strikers who would still be protected by what they call 'the first limb' of section 3 of the Trades Disputes Act 1906. All other strikers are cast into the limbo of being 'civilly liable.'

It is interesting to note the subtle stages of argumentation by which the Donovan Report reaches the recommendations that all strikes (except 5 per cent—or less) should be 'illegalised.' First 'trade unions should be granted Corporate personality': secondly they 'should register' and all will be required to do so; thirdly the legal definition of a trade union should be amended and this new definition should include its being registered (so that a body not so registered, would cease, in law, to be a trade union); fourthly that new powers of supervision over the unions should be given to the Registrar; fifthly, that sections 1, 2, and 3 of the Trade Disputes Act 1906 should 'continue to apply to persons and combinations who are not trade unions with the exception of the first part of section 3 of the Trades Disputes Act 1906.'

Nothing here has been left out but the termination initials QED: the proof appears complete. But if there seems anything lacking the omission is easily supplied from the Supplementary Note.⁴

⁴ Supplementary Note by Lord Robens, Sir George Pollock and Mr. John Thomson. We agree with the view expressed by Lord Tangle in his supplementary note that the Industrial Relations Commission should have power to de-register a trade union or employers' association for failure to comply with its own rules or for breaches of registered agreements on the part of the union (or association), its officers and members of such frequency or gravity as in the opinion of the Industrial Relations Commission justifies de-registration, with a right of appeal against this decision to the Industrial Court.' (Cmnd. 3623, page 287.)

And what about section 4⁵ which gives trade unions a certain immunity from civil actions? This the Commissioners want to limit to situations 'in contemplation or furtherance of a trade dispute.'

Not only these sections 3 and 4 but indeed the whole Act has for sixty years outraged the deepest professional feelings of lawyers brought up in the strictest tenets of a jurisprudence which reaches back to the Middle Ages and beyond (as witness Pollock and Maitland's massive *History of English Law* up to 1272) and a still flourishing common law which ante-dates all statutes. Judges ('judges whose decisions have invariably favoured Capital as against the interests of Labour,' wrote TUC Secretary Bowerman in 1910), stipendiary magistrates, recorders, Queen's Counsel, barristers-at-law, solicitors, notaries public and articled clerks—all regarded the Act as 'a malign and foreign accretion upon the majestic body' of English Law. The men of law, however, have been but as 'servants or agents' of the ruling class—for whose use and needs the age-old law is reinterpreted, remoulded and remade.

In 1965 hopeful glances were cast at the Royal Commission. What would it do? Well, it discussed the matter, and naturally showed a strong disposition to tamper with several sections. In addition they made a recommendation that the whole of the labour laws should be not only consolidated but codified. In a new code then must repose any hankering for further mutilation of the Act of 1906.

What will be the outcome of discussion at the TUC? For that the movement must wait and see. But as the delegates assemble at Blackpool they may recall their precursors whose portraits stud the centenary photographic album commended to them by the Queen. If any of those figures of the past could materialise or speak with ancestral voices, there is little doubt but that they would utter a warning:

'Beware of Royal Commissions. Beware of them even when your own people number among the commissioners. Beware above all of the prehensile tongues of the lawyers. Hold fast to the Trade Disputes Act 1906, your sheet-anchor, your palladium. Let improvements appear as successive new Acts. But do not let them (and do not let Parliament) tamper with the Act of 1906. It is your Bill of Rights.'

⁵ Section 4 of the Trades Disputes Act 1906 runs: '4. An action against a trade union, whether of workmen or masters, or against any members or officials thereof on behalf of themselves and all other members of the trade union in respect of any tortious act alleged to have been committed by or on behalf of the trade union, shall not be entertained by any court.'

FULTON AND THE CIVIL SERVICE

Stanley Mayne

Former General Secretary of the Institution of Professional Civil Servants

FOR over fifty years professional, scientific and technical staffs in the Civil Service have complained of being undervalued as compared with administrative, executive and clerical staffs. Fundamentally this is because the civil service in the last 100 years has been organised against a background of the Northcote-Trevelyan Report of 1854. There have been vast changes and the position of the clerical and executive classes has been changed out of all recognition by the Reorganisation Report of 1920 and much subsequent agitation and trade union activity. In all these changes the professionals (short for professional, scientific and technical) have taken second place and, though their relative position has been much improved, fundamentally they are still the inferiors in pay and esteem.

This contention is illustrated very simply by the following comparison of normal careers in three classes. The Administrative, the Works Group (Engineers, Architects, Surveyors), and Scientific Officer. The figures are based on Civil Service Manpower 1966 statistics taking the median age of those promoted to each grade within each class. This is quoted from a valuable publication *Specialists and Generalists* from Allen and Unwin, 32s.

Direct Entrants (ages 23-60 in each case)

Administrative total remuneration	..	..	..	£124,970
Works Group total remuneration	..	..	..	£84,654
Scientific Officer total remuneration	..	..	..	£92,324

Against this background it can be understood easily why the Institution of Professional Civil Servants welcomed the appointment of the Fulton Committee in 1966 to examine the structure, recruitment and management, including training, of the Home Civil Service. That Committee has now reported (Cmnd. 3638, price 17s. 6d.). What is the result?

Looked at in terms of the broad principles of organisation it is good. Looked at in its effects on particular groups of civil servants it may be very bad.

For the professionals the Report looks good. For some odd reason

it takes a curiously amateur journalistic swipe at the Administrative class by dubbing them as 'amateurs.' They are, in fact, highly professional in their own field of work and elsewhere in the report appropriate tribute is paid to their ability and flexibility. The recommendations should mitigate, and may result in removing, the present differentiation against professionals. But there is a lot of trade union bargaining to be done before the answer can be seen. The Report recommends 'All classes should be abolished and replaced by a single, unified grading structure covering all civil servants from top to bottom.' This does not mean that everyone will move up the ladder from the bottom to the top. It will certainly rationalise the present absurdity of 1,400 different grades nearly all of which have different scales. But will it alter the table in the second paragraph of this article? This is the acid test. The IPCS has a tough job in front of it.

For the Clerical and Executive classes there is a clear threat to one of the major gains of the 1920 Reorganisation Report—the establishment of a long salary scale for the Clerical Officer and for the Executive Officer. The Report says explicitly (paragraph 93) that their proposals should help to reduce the length of these two scales. The Civil Service Clerical Association and the Society of Civil Servants have some difficult times ahead. This is particularly true because the proposal is dressed up to make it look like opportunities to encourage the young and up-and-coming officer. That is the appearance of more promotion in order to stand still on pay.

Shape is given to an old proposal to hive off responsibility for running the Civil Service from the Treasury and, for recruiting, from the Civil Service Commission. This has been argued about for years and is now to happen. The civil servant will not notice the difference and it is extremely doubtful if the Civil Service will.

The proposal for 'Planning Units' in each Government Department is an interesting one. But this assumes vigorous Government concern with development and with keeping an eye on twenty years ahead. The units could be most valuable but they could be merely repositories of thwarted staff. The Fulton Committee had not the task of deciding how to get the right government.

There is much detail in the Report of vital concern to civil servants—job evaluation, temporaries, superannuation, training, the establishment of a staff college—but for this there is no escape from reading the full report. It is well and easily written and the whole of it in 100 pages plus another 100 of valuable appendices.

THE ARTS TODAY

Edited by Stuart Douglass

A DECLARATION OF INTENT

by a jazz critic

Charles Fox, here making his declaration, was born in Weymouth, Dorset. He has worked in a travel agency, as an engineering draughtsman and as a local government officer. He was co-editor (with Christopher Logue and Patrick Brangwyn) of the poetry magazine Ninepence, and has contributed to many magazines and anthologies in Europe and America. He reviews regularly in The Gramophone, was formerly jazz critic for The Guardian, and now writes about jazz for the New Statesman. His Third Programme broadcasts include series on 'Duke Ellington,' 'The Three Faces of Jazz,' 'The Jazz Avant-Garde' and 'Poetry and Jazz.' He has his own weekly programme, 'Jazz Today' (Radio Three), and reviews records for 'The Jazz Scene' (Radio One).



THE function of the jazz critic is often misunderstood, but that is equally true of the critic in most other arts. He is not there to give a simple thumbs-up or thumbs-down, or to provide free puffs. He can pronounce upon technical goofs or tours-de-force, he can discuss how one Bud Powell record compares with another, but in the end his main task is to stimulate his readers, to make them ponder for themselves the element which lies beyond technique, that intangible which can bestow vitality on a performance or else make it sound as dead as mutton. Ideally, too, his antennae should be more acute than those of the casual listener, enabling him to sense

change, social as well as aesthetic, and at least to understand what is happening even if he does not always approve.

Things are complicated by the way that jazz has scampered through the history of European music within about half a century. It began as a social music (the New Orleans street bands are a good example), then turned into part of the entertainment industry (the 1920s and 1930s), and has ended up as an art form, with the musicians doing what they want to do rather than wondering how much they can get away with. Despite all those assertions about there being only two kinds of music, Good and Bad, a critic does need to understand this background in order to assess the relative merits of, say, George Lewis, Fats Waller and Miles Davis.

The fact that jazz is no longer a purely functional music, a background to dancing or drinking, means it has lost a little of its earthiness, its grassroots feel. On the other hand, the music has gained in expressiveness, in emotional scope, while at the same time finding it harder to operate, as pop music does, within the laws of supply-and-demand. For a long time now the jazz musician has been a kind of poor relation, possessing the talent and temperament—and having to put up with the hardships—of a serious artist, yet denied his cultural status.

Normally a critic is wise not to become too involved with performers as people; it can make him too kind-hearted. But musicians are—to utter a truism—essential to the music, and if a critic or any other enthusiast really cares about jazz he must also worry about the welfare of the men who create it. One practical result of this concern has been the launching of the London Jazz Centre by a group of musicians, critics and *aficionados*. The short-term plan is to provide a place where the younger musicians can appear, a successor to Ronnie Scott's Old Place, which had to close when its lease expired. The long-term project is to establish a headquarters where, in addition to public performances, there would be opportunities for musicians to rehearse and study, and facilities for non-players as well.

Critics are often resented by both performers and readers. The former sometimes look on them as unnecessary, while the latter see them as people who spend their time picking faults. This is just one reason why it is desirable that the jazz critic should occasionally desert his typewriter or microphone and take a part in practical activities. Without jeopardising their objectivity, their duty to listen and to interpret, critics can only do good by proving they realise that the jazz musician's problem is not only what to play but where to play.

"STAY AS A FRIEND" [NANCY BUSH]

AN EASY RELAXED RHYTHM [♩ = 100]

GEOFFREY WINTERS

5
A (OPT)

1. NO-BO-DY KNOWS HOW FAR YOU'VE COME,
2. WHAT'S HOME TO- ME IS STRANGE TO YOU,
3. BUT BLACK OR- WHITE OR EAST OR WEST,

BAR. (CHORUS)
OR SOP. B. BASS

LIGHTLY (NON LEGATO)

THE HALF WAY O-V-ER THE WORLD AND MORE. YOU'VE THE
TOWN I KNOW- YOU'VE NEV- ER SEEN. THE
WHAT'S SO DIFFERENT BE- TWEEN US TWO?

LEFT A SEA-SON OF SUN BE- HIND. FOR WIN- TER RAIN AND A CLOUD-Y
SCHOOL FOR WORK, THE STREETS FOR PLAY, ARE PLA- CES WHERE YOU'VE NEV- ER
BECKON! YOU'LL FIND IT HARD TO MAKE A FRIEND OF A BOY LIKE
(GIRL)

This school song (poem by Nancy
specially written for the United Kingdom)

THEATRE

David
Mercer

PLAYWRIGHTS AND SOUTH AFRICA

ABOUT FOUR MONTHS AGO, British playwrights were confronted with a document entitled: 'British Plays in South Africa: Is It Time For Dramatists to Reconsider Their Attitude'? The author was Ted Willis—playwright, President of the Writers' Guild of Great Britain, member of the Anti-Apartheid Movement, and Life Peer.

It referred to a boycott maintained for several years by playwrights against the performance of their work in South Africa to segregated audiences. This boycott was (and remains) supported by Anti-Apartheid and the African National Congress.

The gist of Willis's argument was that the boycott is having no political effect; that it harms the people we wish to help; and that it prevents the free flow of ideas from abroad into South Africa '... the liberal element in the country, who oppose apartheid with great difficulty, are denied the opportunity of seeing and hearing the latest British drama with its vitality and strongly-put criticisms of establishment ideas.' He proposed the ban should be lifted, and royalties received by playwrights from performances of their work before segregated audiences should be donated to one of the coloured artists' associations in South Africa.

The proposal was firmly and publicly rejected in a subsequent letter to *The Times* signed by fifteen British playwrights including John Arden, John Osborne, John Mortimer,

Harold Pinter and others. Arnold Wesker refused to sign the letter, since though he still agreed with the ban he disagreed with some of the letter's terms of reference. In the meantime, Frank Marcus and Terence Frisby had sanctioned performances to segregated audiences of two of their plays. Athol Fugard was reported by Laurens Van der Post as agreeing with suspension of the ban, and a running controversy issued in the columns of *The Times*.

This culminated in a heated debate at the Annual General Meeting of the Writers' Guild, where John McGrath and I submitted a motion which sought to extend the terms of the playwrights' ban to the showing of their films under similar conditions. The motion was defeated. Time and again members returned to the conviction that 'the free flow of ideas' was profoundly more important than the arguments put forward by the boycotters. South Africans, it was said, are culturally starved and demoralised by the impact of the ban. They feel cut off, deprived of the thought and stimulus they might find in contemporary British drama, and above all their racist authorities are thus enabled smugly to preserve their society from the infection of criticism and controversy.

On the face of it a reasonable point of view. But since we know very well that the South African Government and police maintain a strict control over the kinds of ideas in circulation,

it seems naive to suppose they might permit performance of any play which even mildly challenged their political, social or moral authority. One could even say that it is the South African whites themselves who have cut off their country, and that if a liberal white minority is penalised as a consequence they should look to revolution for change—for the book or play which could transform a continent socially has yet to be written.

This is not to ignore the fact that very many whites have struggled and fought, suffered persecution and imprisonment by their regime. They have indeed looked to revolution. These need no explanation or defence, but their fellow-countrymen who require us to accept apartheid in the theatre in the name of cultural liberty and its social benefits, are on thin ice.

Sixty per cent of black and coloured South Africans are illiterate or semi-illiterate. There exist two theatres for non-whites. These are the circumstances in which, it seems, the flower of British dramatic art is to bloom and make its contribution to the humanising of South African society. These are the conditions for which playwrights are openly to accept apartheid, objectively aligning themselves with the white fascists—and doubtless at the same time offering by their action a useful bit of propa-

ganda to those who uphold the South African regime.

The liberal view seems to take account of everything except the fact that the future of South Africa is in black hands. It is they who will make revolution, by every means available including armed struggle. The dispute about the extent to which culture has a concrete role in transforming society lags behind history. The ideas men need to comprehend and overcome oppression, in so far as they exist in bourgeois art at all, exist mainly as a consumer item—a parcel in the window of social-democratic freedom. This is the paradox, and perhaps the tragedy also, of the artist.

One cannot resist the suspicion that in this minor, if symbolic, action by playwrights, the real 'sufferers' are the managers of South African theatres. No doubt they could pack their (white) houses every night with Pinter, Osborne, *et alii*—and make fat profits. Certainly they would do pretty well on the long list of West End comedies and innocuous plays neatly tailored for middle-class consumption, which are the staple diet of the London theatre.

Meanwhile, a new play by Frank Marcus in which a coloured man and a white woman go to bed together, has not been allowed to see the footlights in South Africa.

DID YOU MISS IT?

Many readers have expressed their appreciation of the pictures of striking matchgirls in 1888 and women machinists at Ford's, published in our August issue. Limited supplies of the August *LM* are still available.

TELEVISION

Stuart Douglass

'ELECTION '70'

(The story of the play which the BBC are refusing to perform. It was commissioned last year, written, accepted, passed and paid for. The author believes the decision not to produce this play to be censorship at some level which is not easily discernible.)

A TOWN IN Southern England with much light industry and a West Indian immigrant population of about ten thousand (one in twenty). It is nomination day at a by-election caused by the death of the sitting Labour Member of Parliament in this hitherto safe Labour seat. It is 1970, the year before the '71 General Election. All the professional 'experts' regard the result of this by-election to be a pointer to the chances of either party the following year. This is the last such indication before the nation goes to the polls for the big one.

Labour's fortunes have swung violently in the last few years—a big swing against them in '67 and '68; a gradual swing back through the next two years. There could be a close fight between the two major parties.

The Labour Candidate is a young 'technocrat' of the Labour Right Wing, a Transport House economics expert, married to a millionaire's daughter who is his glittering shield against the reality of his true desertion from Socialism. The Tory Candidate is a landed type, a three-time loser who has suddenly sniffed the scent of victory.

There is a third candidate, a 'lunatic fringe' nominee who was once thrown out of the Labour Party for his openly racist views and who

represents the local Residents' Association which has been heavily infiltrated with Fascists. He is widely regarded as a complete also-ran, expected to poll no more than a few hundred votes. He is a local Councillor.

There are real Socialists in the Council, but they have been sadly disillusioned and weakened by years of Labour betrayal. They are committed to seeing that Labour wins this election on its stated policy, which is the same old platform—Prices and Incomes, the Common Market, support for America, etc.

At a Council Meeting the 'Residents' Councillor makes an attack on the immigrant population of the town. He is supported by a near-riot in the public gallery, a combination of the real Fascists and the misguided residents. He is given banner headlines by one of the local papers which has been printing anti-colour stories for years and is now openly campaigning for him.

It sparks off demonstrations by the right-wing fanatics at both Labour and Tory election meetings. But in spite of this neither Labour nor Tory Candidates make positive statements abhorring racialism, even in the face of the growing anger of the Labour Left which wants stronger anti-incitement laws to be one of the main platforms of the election. There seems to be a tacit agreement between

Labour and Tory that they will not give priority to the 'race problem' in their campaigns. Neither will truly identify himself with the problems of the immigrant for fear of losing the votes of those supporters in the town who have been soaked in racist propaganda.

There is a prominent West Indian who sits on the International Friendship Council along with the political parties and others who have been working for racial harmony in the town. He is expected to recommend his West Indian voters, who voted Labour at the last election, to do so again this time. But he is not so sure. Labour has not acted in good faith about the promulgation of strong legislation to protect his community. The Labour man is cagey about courting the West Indian vote; he does not want to alienate his regular supporters.

The atmosphere of hate in the town builds up towards polling day, with the Fascists working overtime on behalf of the Residents' Candidate, who is consistently disowning them in public. His own private contacts with them are, however, obscure.

On the eve of poll a West Indian is shot down and killed on the street. He has been killed by the Fascists to spread terror through the constituency. The killing is dressed up by the Residents' Candidate as a boiling pot exploding. Immediately he makes a statement that to preserve the lives of coloured immigrants they must be sent back to their own countries.

An urgent meeting of the International Friendship Council is called in the middle of the night. The West Indian and the representative of the Labour Left ask that the two major parties in the town campaign the following day wearing black armbands to show their solidarity and concern for the West Indian community.

Labour and Tory candidates refuse and issue statements simply condemning violence.

On polling day the town is humming with police cars, searching for the killer of the West Indian worker. Some poll workers wear black armbands and become the targets of a roving band of Fascist thugs (wearing white armbands).

Because of the timidity of the Labour Candidate the West Indian advises his countrymen to abstain from voting and take no part in the election. Fear stalks the town. Both Labour and Tory voters stay at home. There is a ridiculously small poll. Only four thousand people attend the ballot.

At the count the Residents' Candidate scrapes home. The true Socialists realise that with 24 similar constituencies casting their votes at the General Election, the balance of power in the country could rest in the hands of BAR (the British Association of Residents), a national organisation of racist residents whose policy is to repatriate all coloured people. It is this organisation which is sponsoring the successful candidate. Fascism in Britain is only just round the corner.

The new Member of Parliament makes his victory speech while the thugs take care of the protests outside the town hall. He says that when he takes his seat in Westminster his first act will be to put down a Bill which will inaugurate the construction of a new town in East Anglia which will become a 'half-way house' for all coloured people, prior to their repatriation. His suggestion is, of course, for one enormous ghetto/concentration camp.

'This will be the final solution to the Negro problem in this country,' he says.

The words 'FINAL SOLUTION' ring in our ears as the play ends.

ECONOMIC OUTLOOK

John Eaton

WHAT does the future hold for Britain? Nothing but restrictions, crises and frustrations—unless the socialist movement can impose its will against the policies of monopoly capitalism that continue to dominate the economic and social life of Britain.

It is essential that the working-class movement at all levels from shop-floor up concerns itself with *positive* alternative policies to save Britain from the galloping decay to which the policies of big capital and the bankers otherwise will inevitably lead.

Policies currently being pursued are dictated by narrow financial interests and by economic thinking inherited from situations that no longer exist. Referring to the recent foreign credits package, C. Gordon Tether wrote in the *Financial Times* June 24, 'it is not difficult to see why this way of tackling the problem appeals to the Bank of England. For there are no cows that Threadneedle Street regards as more sacred than those associated with London's international banker functions . . . yet it must surely be evident by now that such continual bolstering up of the crumbling sterling end of the reserve currency structure does not get anyone very far, seeing that it neither finally relieves Britain of the bugbear nor finally eliminates the threat to the world's monetary health that her inability to cope with it poses.'

The outlook can only be tighter economic strangulation and more and more financial crises unless we are prepared to take our bearings from what is new. The essentials of the new situation are first the attitudes and demands of people and, second, the impact of the technological revolution. 'Economic engineers', who think they can manipulate labour as if it were an inanimate object, paying no regard to the political aspirations and demands of workers as people, are unrealistic and dangerous to the community as, say, structural engineers who pay no regard to the strengths of materials. Not so long ago we were being told of the national need for coal and coal miners. Now, as Bill Paynter stated in a recent speech (see *August Labour Monthly*, page 353), from 700,000 employed in coal-mining in 1959 the figure will drop to 160,000 in 1975. The report by McKinsey and Company on containerisation states (page 86) that when container systems are fully developed the general cargo moved by each dock worker will be approximately twenty times as much as at present. ICI last year increased the volume of its output by 6 per cent with

4,000 fewer workers. These are but a few examples of what is happening everywhere. At the same time the official economic analysts assert that Britain's major problem is its failure to improve productivity rapidly enough. To hammer the point home the Ministry of Labour changes its name to Ministry of Productivity. The kernel of official policy is to break the balance of payments problem by making the economy more competitive. To this end internal demand is cut (meaning unemployment and holding down workers' income). This whole line of policy is an economic madness dictated by an unwillingness to depart from the traditional policies of the banking world. Shock treatment by devaluation has not even given temporary relief. 'Disappointment caused by the behaviour of the UK's trade figures', says the *Financial Times* July 9, 1968, 'encouraged speculation against the pound by raising the question whether even a devaluation can provide the answer to the problem presented by Britain's chronic payments deficit.' Later this same article says that in the opinion of 'the world at large' . . . 'the sterling edifice is crumbling.' The sooner we recognise that there is no future in the old bankers' policies, the sooner there is a chance of striking out on a new tack and starting to build an economy capable of using our technological potential for the benefit of the British people.

Barbara Castle in a party political broadcast on Wednesday, June 26, spoke of greater industrial competitiveness as our only hope, and urged on us the objective of more efficient use of labour by intelligent planning. All this sounds fine, but there are some important ambiguities to sort out. Are we to leave our foreign exchange and trade free from any controls and turn all our efforts into getting fewer and fewer people to produce more and more goods so that a handful of giant organisations here can compete successfully against a handful of similar giants in USA or Europe? What does efficient use of labour by intelligent planning mean? Suppose we have 1,000 people producing say 1,000 commodities; if we get 600 to produce 1,000 commodities and make 400 people redundant, is that more efficient? Is that better planning? Is it more efficient to have greater productivity in the coalfields and to have the sons of miners (better educated and better trained than their fathers) facing more and more difficulties about suitable jobs to go to when their schooldays are done? Economic efficiency cannot from a socialist or from a popular democratic point of view be narrowly defined in terms of achievement in individual factories. Appalling social problems follow from the concentration of production on a narrow-

ing élite (as in USA). Economic efficiency must be defined in terms of efficient use of the sum total of productive resources. The only worthwhile measure of productivity for us is the volume of production divided by the *employable* labour force. The input to the economy is the energy and skills of everyone who wants to be active; the output, goods and services, to meet the community's needs. If we fail to use any individual's skills and energies, we not only deprive the community of his product, we deprive him of the satisfaction of a job well done and of the income to which his abilities entitle him.

The word 'redundancy' needs to be obliterated from the economists' vocabulary. If the objective is profit and labour simply a cost to be cut, it makes sense, but if the objective of economic planning is to use economic resources effectively, one must start by asking what jobs are there for the available resources of labour to perform. If productivity plans go hand-in-hand with so many thousand coal miners, so many thousand dockers, so many thousand engineers being declared 'redundant', the spirit of the workers throughout industry is inevitably soured. The only point in doing job X with *half n* workers instead of *n*, is to enable the *half n* to do more useful work elsewhere. Any productivity plans that do not *explicitly* include plans for training or using on project Y the skills released from project X, are not genuine productivity plans. These days the nature of many jobs is changing rapidly and a lot of re-training and adaptation to new types of work is needed. This workers well understand. But how can they co-operate in industrial change if work to match each individual's capabilities is not guaranteed? As serious as the mounting statistics of unemployment is the misuse of people in employment.

The logic behind the economic policy that Britain is actually following implies a quite different approach to increased productivity. The logic is to let the bankers go on playing their old game and help a few leading firms gain competitive advantages in the world capitalist market in the hope that we may thence obtain a favourable balance of payments. It does not require much reflection to see that this is a beggar-my-neighbour policy in which, if Britain gains, someone else must lose. To a 'favourable' balance of payments in one place must correspond an 'unfavourable' balance elsewhere. Such a policy leaves resources unused at home and abroad. The alternative is planning to use all available resources and to protect the balance of payments by import and exchange controls whenever necessary

and by deliberately shaped trade policies that help our own development as well as that of countries abroad. The example of France shows that the use of import controls is perfectly feasible. 'They have hardly been in balance of payments trouble for five minutes', writes the *Financial Times*, June 28, 1968, 'before they are declaring that they see themselves as having every right to tackle the danger of imports getting out of hand by imposing restrictions that will keep them down to reasonable levels while things are sorted out.'

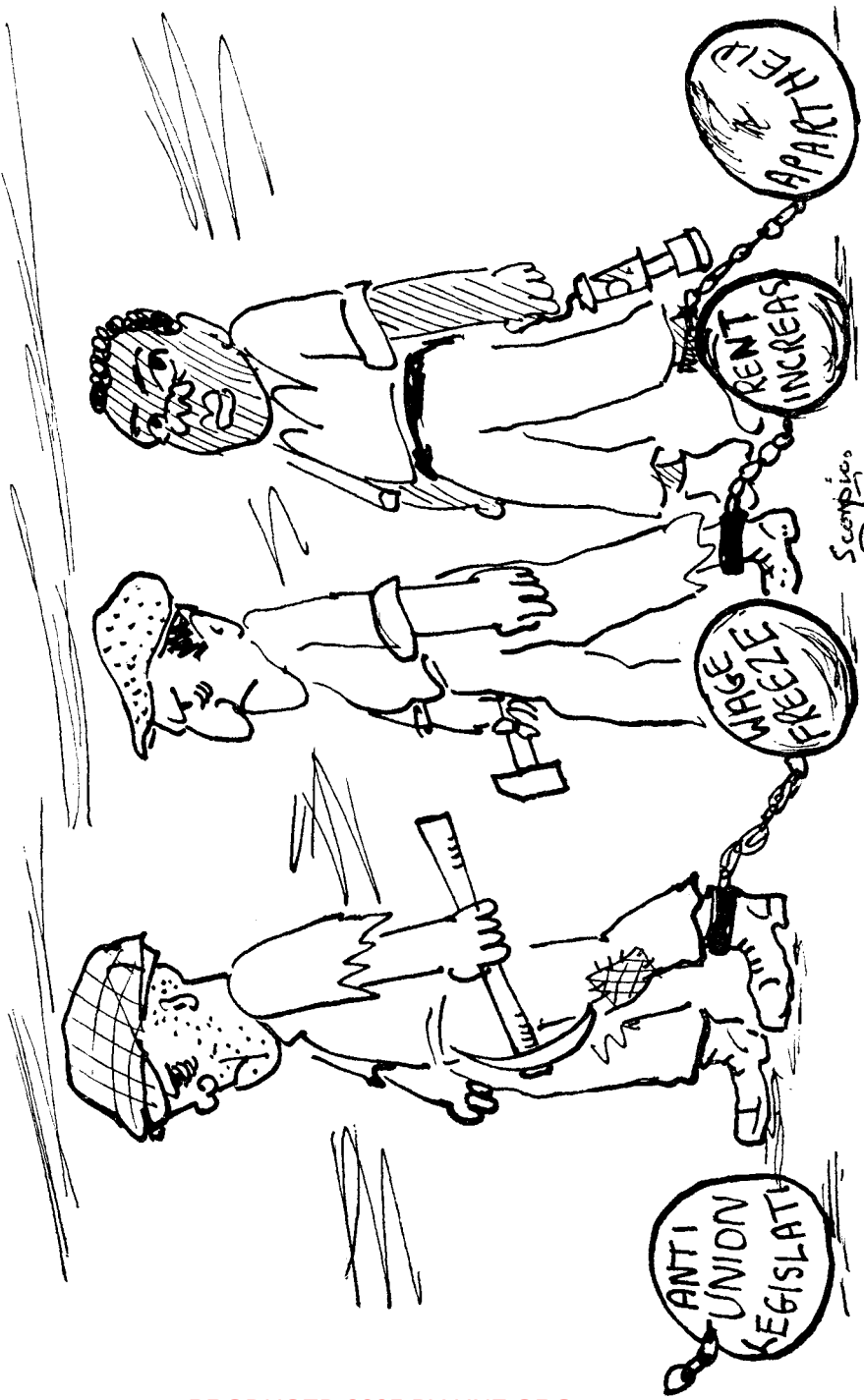
To liberate the potential of our unused resources and our new technologies we need new financial policies internally also. High interest rates (highly profitable, incidentally, to the international bankers) and policy restrictions actually prevent the use of available productive resources, directly leading to redundancies and unemployment. Innovations are stifled and the status quo strengthened. A new kind of financial planning is needed with the quite opposite aim of bringing new resources into employment. Properly directed this must lead to great increases in national wealth and at the same time give us the wherewithal to overcome external economic problems. Of course, careful and hard thought will be needed to see that new resources brought into play by expansive financial policies, are well used, that bureaucratic waste is avoided, that suitable incentives and competition encourage improved methods and innovations, that socially useful products get priority and that the quality and characteristics of commodities produced are determined by the consumers' needs. But difficult as it may be to solve all these problems fully, a policy aimed at productive use of all available resources alone can change the economic outlook for the better. The great asset that we need to use properly is people. If people in all the various organisations of British society begin to regard the collective work they perform as an activity for which they, themselves, must take responsibility and seek to control, they will be able to catalogue and suggest uses for a vast potential of resources that are at present idle or misused. They will be able to check that the funds made available by expansive financial policies are properly used for socially progressive purposes. The point is people on the job know what is going on; what they lack at present is power to influence decisions, essentially power to find funds with which to carry out the policy of using resources and the power to see that the funds are used on the right sort of project and in a way best suited to the interests of those employed on them.

Positive planning to use resources calls for much more economic

information and much better analysis of alternative possibilities. However, it is precisely in this field that the technological revolution offers new possibilities of democratic planning. It is more and more being recognised that the keys to economic advance in the future are education, research, and effective information processing with the aid of electronics and the computer in particular. In all these fields Britain is very strongly placed save only for political will to use the potential that we have. Comparatively small sums in relation to our present national investments of over £6,000,000,000 would enable teams of scientists, economists, mathematicians and others to help factories, towns, regions etc., find the most effective ways of integrating their economic efforts and making proper use of resources. The computer provides an important means to organisational efficiency. A computer grid and an 'information utility' democratically organised could have an important impact on the existing social and economic structure. But we need a courageous ambitious programme to take advantage of these possibilities and to see that the computer is used in the service of democracy and not as an instrument of autocratic organisation. In a speech urging changes in computer policy on July 3, 1968 Professor Stanley Gill (who is professor of computer sciences in London University) stated, 'In 1949 we in this country held a leading position and we had a great opportunity. We had the pioneers, the resources and the know-how, and the entrance fee was tiny. If the amount we now spend each week on computing had been invested in 1950, we could have forged ahead. Yet we failed to do so. . . . Recent developments . . . are adding up to a second computer revolution. Again, this country has an opportunity. It is not so clear cut as the first, perhaps, but this time we do have a widespread knowledge of computers among people who matter. And this time we cannot afford to fail, because the stakes are far higher.'

Only a determined initiative from socialists in the Labour Movement can see that the technological possibilities of the present times are seized and exploited in a socially beneficial way. We must break with the worn-out routines of economic thinking. But the fight to claim the great potential for the people against the monopolies must begin here and now by the workers themselves pressing for new positive policies appropriate to the possibilities that they are better placed than anyone else to see and grasp.

THE FREE WORLD !



RED LIGHT IN LAOS

Commander Edgar P. Young, RN Retired

PUBLIC opinion in this country, and throughout the world, is very rightly concerned and apprehensive at the prolonged deadlock of the Paris peace talks resulting from the stubborn refusal of the US government to make progress possible by the unconditional cessation of its quite indefensible bombing of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam. It should be equally so about the US bombing of the neighbouring Kingdom of Laos, which, though never announced officially, has been repeatedly admitted, after considerable delay, and which has become as intense as that of Vietnam during the past two months. For it should be noted that this bombing started in May, 1964, i.e. before the faked 'incident' in the Gulf of Tonkin (August, 1964) and well before the US 'escalation' of the war against Vietnam, in the Spring of 1965. Its recent intensification might well be the prelude to further extension of US aggression in the Indo-China peninsula—in Cambodia, as well as in Laos—the dangerous consequences of which will be appreciated when one looks at the map and notes that Laos, besides having a long frontier with the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, through which the French sought to outflank the defences there (hence their base at Dien Bien Phu), borders directly also on the People's Republic of China.

Attention to this dangerous possibility would seem to have been drawn by Mr. Averell Harriman, at the 15th session of the Paris peace talks, on July 31, when he accused the Democratic Republic of Vietnam of extending the war 'in pursuit of political ends by military means' in Laos, though this may have been merely for the purpose of diverting attention from the awkward question of the bombing of that country. Quoting at length from a White Paper published recently by Prince Souvanna Phouma, the Prime Minister of Laos, he accused the Democratic Republic of Vietnam of having introduced into Laos 'at least four divisions, representing some 40,000 troops,' and called on that country to respect the Geneva agreement of 1962 on Laos 'like the other signatories' and to 'leave Laos to the Laotians.'

Harking back to the time of the Geneva Conference of 1954, at which the western participants persuaded their opponents to accept non-representation of the Laotian resistance movement,

Pathet Lao, and of its less formidable counterpart in Cambodia, Khmer Issarak, and forgetful, it would seem, of the fact that he himself had negotiated with its political organisation, the Neo Lao Haksat, at Geneva in 1962, Mr. Harriman had the effrontery to quote further from the White Paper mentioned above to the effect that 'the Laotian Communist Party represents nothing, having no armed forces, no arms and no financial resources, and therefore could not exist without the support of North Vietnamese troops.' The complete absurdity of this last statement must surely have been known to him, moreover, for he can hardly have been unaware of the fact that the Neo Lao Haksat has gone on from strength to strength since it challengingly confronted him at Geneva in 1962, until it now controls two-thirds of the territory and half the population of Laos, leaving its opponents, notwithstanding massive US financial and military support, in doubtful and conditional control only of a narrow strip along Mekong river, bordering on Thailand.

If he believes, as is pretended by the US puppet presiding over the government in Vientiane whom he quoted, that it is really the North Vietnamese who exercise this control, and that US bombing is carried out solely for the purpose of preventing that control being used covering the transit through Laos of North Vietnamese troops and war supplies into South Vietnam, he must explain why it is that that bombing is directed most intensely against the centre of the Neo Lao Haksat administration, in the province of Sam Neua and against centres of population far removed from the roads and trails along which reinforcements of the South Vietnamese Liberation Army might pass, and why the fiendish anti-personnel pellet bombs are used so extensively. It is from this ruthless and indiscriminate bombing, incidentally, that the refugees, stated to number 600,000, have fled into the non-liberated parts of Laos, not, as is pretended, from the 'terror' of the Neo Lao Haksat.

For a true picture of the present situation in 'Free World' Laos and, more particularly, in Liberated Laos, I must refer readers to an excellent series of five articles by Jacques Decornoy, special correspondent of *Le Monde*, which appeared in that newspaper on August 3-8. These reveal a situation very similar to that which obtains in Vietnam, north and south of the 17th parallel—equally amazing, and equally encouraging. Noteworthy points in these are the following.

The author quotes an American diplomat in Vientiane, the Laotian capital, as having said to him: 'Before any progress can be

made in this country, everything will have to be brought to the ground. We must take the inhabitants right back to zero and do away with their traditional culture, which is an obstacle to everything.' In contrast to this, he describes how all kinds of 'traditional culture,' including notably that of the ethnic minorities, is actively fostered by the Neo Lao Haksat in the Liberated territory, and is made the basis for the development of a new Laotian 'nationalism,' and is grafting on to it modern education and technical training. This is of importance because the State of Laos, like many of the newly established States in Africa, was established under the French in accordance with their political convenience, regardless of ethnical distribution of population, with the result that the Lao represent a bare 50 per cent of its population and some 50 per cent of the Lao have been allotted to Thailand, while the mountainous regions on the borders of Vietnam are inhabited by Neo and other ethnic minorities, who are cut off from similar minorities in Vietnam.

He describes later a conversation with Prince Souphanouvong, leader of the Neo Lao Haksat, in which was quoted the declaration made by his half-brother, Prince Souvanna Phouma, that the Neo Lao Haksat will 'rejoin the national community' only when it has been 'liberated' from 'North Vietnamese domination.' This, he said, shows a complete misunderstanding of the viewpoint of the leadership of the Neo Lao Haksat, which is that Vientiane must be disengaged from the enormous American influence to which it is at present subjugated, and that the Americans must cease all intervention in Laos. This viewpoint, adds the author, has been more generally and more feelingly adopted by the mass of the population of liberated Laos as the result of their bombing by American aircraft, which has made them loathe anything even remotely connected with the US. The Laotians are uncompromisingly determined that the Americans must clear out of their country, lock, stock and barrel, and this means the withdrawal with them of the so-called 'Private' air companies—Air America and Air Continental—which are being used to supply food, arms and 'advisers' (numbering now well over 3,000, including 72 Military Attachés) for misguided so-called 'resistance groups' among the Meo.

And finally, contrary to what some may suppose, the Neo Lao Haksat is insistent that the withdrawal of the Americans shall be accompanied by the establishment in power of a government of 'National Union,' as prescribed by the Geneva agreement of 1962, but has never yet been allowed to function. Pending this each

party shall administer the area which it effectively controls, as described earlier in this article. The ultimate results of this is a foregone conclusion, of course, since the opponents of the Neo Lao Haksat have no programme of ideology to match and are at loggerheads with each other.

This cannot come about, however, until matters have been settled in Vietnam, i.e. in accordance with the demands of the Vietnamese people, and when it does come about, difficulties arising from past history and social structure far greater than those which may be expected in Vietnam will be experienced. If for this reason only, the policy and programme of Free Laos is likely to be as different from that of Vietnam, as those of Vietnam are from, for instance, those of China. There is no doubt, however, according to an interview with Prince Souphanouvong which appeared in *Pravda* of August 6, that the moral and material support which has been and is being afforded to the Neo Lao Haksat by the USSR in its struggle for the liberation of Laos from the Americans is so widely realised and appreciated that Free Laos, albeit neutralist, will be firmly well-disposed towards that country.

Future of the Left

BREAKING THE STALEMATE

M. J. Pentz

I AM in general agreement with D. N. Pritt's analysis of the situation (*LM*, May 1968) and with his view that 'the remedy . . . lies in the transformation of the Labour Party by the progressive forces within it, acting in co-operation with the Communist Party, resting firmly on the trade unions, and rallying and enlisting all the genuine forces to be found outside the Labour Party . . .', and that 'in the long run we all know that we can only look for advance to a mass party professing Socialism, i.e. a reformed Labour Party, accepting the Communist Party as a valuable ally and a commando force for a genuinely accepted class struggle, with the backing of progressive trade unions.'

The following questions arise:

1. How is the Labour Party to be transformed by 'the progressive forces within it,' and what are these 'progressive forces?'

2. What is meant by 'acting in co-operation with the Communist Party', and by 'accepting the Communist Party as a valuable ally and a commando force'?

3. What implications does this conception of the role of the Communist Party have in relation to its character and policy? Does the present character and policy of the Communist Party correspond with this conception?

4. What are 'the genuine forces to be found outside the Labour Party' which should be 'rallied' and 'enlisted'? Why? How?

The progressive forces within the Labour Party consist of a certain fraction of the individual members, organised (more or less) in the Constituency Parties, and a certain number of affiliated trade unions. In terms of voting power, the latter are very much more important than the former. It follows that if the Labour Party is to be transformed, that is if it is to have a socialist policy and leadership instead of a crypto-Tory policy (in practice, if not in theory) and leadership (in both theory and practice), then a decisive majority of trade union votes must be consistently won by the Left. Experience has shown, however, that it is not enough to win a majority for what Pritt calls 'useful and progressive resolutions on points of cardinal importance' at the TUC or the Labour Party Conference. The right-wing leaders of both bodies have not shown the slightest compunction in ignoring such resolutions and in pursuing policies that are even diametrically opposed to them. We shall return to this point later on.

If we accept that trade union backing for progressive policies is a necessary condition, if not a sufficient one, for transforming the Labour Party, how is this to be achieved? The answer is obvious, and has an immediate bearing upon the role of the Communist Party. The trade unions have their basic roots in the places where their members work, in the factories, mines, transport depots, docks, building sites and so on. These are moreover the places where the workers are at grips with the hard realities of the class struggle at its source. The policy and leadership of the unions can only be consistently Socialist if there is consistent political work at the base. This implies the existence of an effective political organisation, capable of giving leadership in the practical day-to-day struggle and at the same time, in the course of that struggle, developing the socialist political consciousness of the organised workers. That organisation is, or should be, the Communist Party.

Except perhaps in a transitional phase, where we could conceive of 'the progressive forces within the Labour Party' 'acting in co-

operation with the Communist Party,' it is difficult to imagine the Labour Party 'accepting the Communist Party as a valuable ally' without accepting its reaffiliation. This in turn, implies a drastic change in the policy and leadership of the Labour Party, since the present dominant right-wing leadership will clearly never accept any such thing. The internal pressure required to bring this about would have to be very strong, so strong as to make the reaffiliation of the Communist Party a consequence rather than a cause of the required transformation of the Labour Party.

We should therefore put it quite plainly, and say that there must be co-operation between the Communist Party and the progressive forces within the Labour Party culminating in the transformation of the latter and the reaffiliation of the former. The ground on which such co-operation must take place is, first and foremost, the trade unions and their industrial base, but also in all forms of mass movement of the people, for peace against racialism, on rents, housing, education and so on.

If the objective is to develop a Socialist political consciousness among the organised workers, the Communist Party must be clearly and unambiguously a *revolutionary* party, since Socialism will not be won without revolution, be it 'peaceful' or 'violent.' Yet one has the impression that the Communist Party, in its preoccupation with trying to gain mass electoral support (and failing lamentably to do so), has been playing down its revolutionary character and purpose. This has had the effect, among others, of leaving the field open to all sorts of pseudo-revolutionary 'ultra-Left' elements (whose objective effect has, as usual, been diversionary and disruptive and hence of advantage to the Right), particularly among the youth and in the peace movement (e.g. on the Vietnam issue—witness the Grosvenor Square demonstration).

This brings us to the fourth question: what are 'the genuine forces to be found outside the Labour Party', which should be 'rallied and enlisted?' If these forces are outside the Labour Party, it must be for one of two reasons. Either they do not see, or no longer see, the Labour Party as an organisation capable of defending or advancing their immediate or long-term interests, and are, or have become, politically passive and apathetic. Or they are, on the contrary, very much to the Left of the Labour Party and see no point in joining it and becoming politically gagged and bound. In the latter case, one might ask why they are not in the Communist Party, an essential instrument for any revolutionary change.

SOCIALIST AGRICULTURE IN THE GDR

Henry Metelmann

(The writer of this article was born in Hamburg in 1922 of working-class parents. He was a member of the Hitler Youth and during the war fought in the army against the Soviet Union. He became a prisoner-of-war and was sent to America, thence to England, where he has since stayed. He is now a railway worker and has been a member of the Communist Party since 1963—Ed. LM.)

IN the summer of 1960 my wife and I visited the German Democratic Republic. The collectivisation of small and medium farms had been carried through in the previous spring. The huge estates of the Junkers had already been taken over by the people in 1945, without compensation.

We found that quite a number of the farming people were worried. They had no real heart for handing what they considered their land to the nation. It had belonged to them for generations. They had worked hard on it, and although in most cases the whole family had to work few of them enjoyed more than a bare, always insecure, existence.

At that time it was said by many that 'human nature just cannot be changed,' that 'a farmer whose land is taken away from him will lose all interest' and that 'socialism and agriculture never go together.' On the surface there seemed to be some truth in this. Some farms and fields had a neglected look about them. It seemed to us that there was considerable passive resistance, while a gigantic programme ground its way through its teething troubles. Western propaganda had its heyday. There was the proof: private enterprise was the only thing that worked, socialism was an ugly dream and incompatible with human nature. And quite a few people went from East to West.

Last month we again visited the GDR and had a close look at the countryside. Farms now looked spick-and-span; fields were well-tended; modern farm machinery on a large scale caught our eye everywhere, attended to by a minimum of skilled operators where formerly a multitude of land workers had fulfilled their hard task.

We talked to many of them. What had happened? Our main impression was that there had been a change in thinking. Although suspicious and low in heart in 1960, farming people could not just

stand by and see their farms and fields becoming neglected. At first perhaps only instinct but later better judgment, common-sense and education triumphed over age-old prejudices, well-fanned by Western propaganda always on the look-out for the slightest gap to put in the wedge. The difficult change-over period had been relatively short.

We still heard criticism. No doubt in some cases there was justification for it, but a very deep-going transformation had clearly materialised. And even those who sometimes had personal reservations fully agreed that the overall change had been for the better. The living-standards of all people were secure and steadily rising. They had made a law which made unemployment simply illegal. In their planned economy their market is guaranteed; they have no worries on that score. Abundant opportunities for their children in all fields of life and often, if they are not too old, also for themselves are such as they have never been before. Their educational system, looked at along a broad front, is second-to-none and on a much higher level than that of any other Western nation.

They do not really care now whether the land belongs to them on paper or to the community, and find it rather laughable and unimportant even in a practical sense. They work on the land—easier than before. They live on it—better than before. And it is beginning to dawn on them that although ‘the land has been taken away from them’ it is only now that it really belongs to them. No big landlord, nobody, can give them the sack, terminate their contract or force bankruptcy on them. These formerly feared terms have lost all meaning. Their rights are firmly anchored in their well-thought-out constitution, and in a democratic way they see to it that the law is made a reality.

The Western press, the big megaphones of the paper-Tsar Axel Springer, have become very quiet on this issue. Clearly, it is not ‘news’ to spotlight success in socialist agriculture. If too much is mentioned people’s attention in West Germany (disturbed of late by ‘happenings’ which they thought had gone out forever with Hitler) might be drawn unnecessarily to Marx’s dictum—when man changes his environment he changes his thinking and in time his whole life.

TRIBUTE TO ANDREW ROTHSTEIN

THE Editorial Board of *Labour Monthly* has pleasure in paying honour to one of its most distinguished members, and a long-standing friend of our journal, as well as a tireless and brilliant contributor, from its foundation forty-seven years ago, Andrew Rothstein, who reaches his seventieth birthday on September 26.

Son of one of the great pioneers of socialism in this country, Theodore Rothstein, who played a foremost part as a Marxist theoretician, in the political activity of the Social Democratic Federation and the British Socialist Party, and in the foundation of the Communist Party, as well as subsequently in the Soviet Union, Andrew grew up from his earliest days in the climate of Marxism and in the midst of the activities of the socialist and labour movement.

Incidentally, contact between Andrew and the Editor of our magazine began in socialist student days together in Balliol College, Oxford, before our Editor was sent down, and before the Russian Revolution demonstrated the first triumph of Marxism.

The variety and range of Andrew Rothstein's activity in every field, equally in Marxist scholarship, as a journalist and author (with a host of authoritative books on European politics and socialist development), and in direct political participation, defies description. Chairman of the Marx Memorial Library, with his leadership of the successful campaign for the preservation and reconstruction of its historic building; foremost champion of friendship with the Soviet Union and the socialist world; for many years on the Executive Committee of the Communist Party; a former chairman of the Foreign Press Association; a polemist whose skilled pen and encyclopaedic knowledge has flayed every enemy of socialism: there is scarcely any field of activity in which he has not played his part.

To record his contributions to our magazine from the beginning, whether in his own name, as Diplomatic Correspondent, or sometimes in other names, not to mention his Notes of the Month during absences of the Editor, would fill half the current number. We had hoped to list his main contributions; but space defeated us. And this is to leave out of account his unfailing guidance and advice on the Board as well as in problems of editorial production.

With warmest heartfelt affection and admiration we pay tribute to Andrew Rothstein and wish him many more years of happy creative activity in the cause of socialism.

BOOKS

The Open Philosophy and the Open Society

Maurice Cornforth

Lawrence & Wishart, 390 pp., cloth 63s., paper 30s.

THIS NEW WORK by a Marxist well known for the clarity of his writings on philosophy will be widely welcomed. It takes the form of a critique of the anti-Marxist criticism and views of Dr. Popper, and is both topical and important. It is topical because Dr. Popper is an eminent authority on scientific method and therefore his 'scientific' refutation of Marxism has considerable influence in academic circles. It is important not only because Cornforth answers Popper point by point with closely-reasoned argument (and not by reliance on authorities), but because he develops his critique to present a positive statement of Marxist theory as Engels did in his treatment of Eugen Dühring.

The title of the book may seem puzzling but it arises from Popper's thesis that Marxism is an unscientific dogma which in practice results in a tyranny that he calls a 'closed' society. In contrast Cornforth presents his view of Marxism as the scientific basis for a really 'open', socialist society. Accordingly, he divides his work into three sections. In the first, the most fundamental and original in content, he demolishes the pretention that dialectical materialism rests on unscientific propositions which are essentially unfalsifiable and unprovable, such that, as Popper says, 'Any development whatever can be made to fit the dialectic scheme'. Here Cornforth breaks new ground

with his freshly written account of the criteria for the truth of scientific propositions which are not empirically verifiable and the application of such tests in relation to dialectics, contradictions, conceptual thought and the theory of knowledge.

The next section, called Premises for Politics, deals with dialectical materialism applied to the understanding of human society and its history. Here Cornforth examines at length Popper's accusation that Marxism replaces the scientific study of social affairs by a dogma, which he calls 'historicism', that society must pass through a preordained dialectical development from primitive communism through class society to modern communism. This is only a variant of the old charge that Marxism is a fatalist doctrine which maintains that whatever happens is fated to happen and nothing can be done to prevent it or to bring it about. On this basis Popper charges Marxists with a series of other errors causing their adherents to suppress individuality and instigate tyranny. This provides a wide field for Cornforth patiently to explain the real character of historical materialism and its application to social history, politics, the critique of capitalism, and the nature of classes, political power, democracy and social revolution, in the course of which he exposes and refutes the many misconceptions and confusions introduced by Dr. Popper.

The final section deals with the charge that Marxists' utopian plans of wholesale social revolution, instead of the piecemeal reforms that Popper advocates under the grand name of 'social engineering', lead to a closed society fettered by tyrannical regulations and political dictatorship. In this connection, Cornforth examines the concepts of freedom and equality, and the way forward to a real open

society and transition to communism. In this sphere Popper in fact abandons the pretence of scientific refutation and trots out all the hoary old statements of anti-Communist propaganda, such as equating communism and fascism, and asserting that Communists advocate violence and 'lawless tyranny.' It becomes clear that, as Cornforth says, Popper's open society 'is only another name for capitalism.' The accusation that Marxists invent a baseless theory to justify the social and political change

they desire is the opposite of the truth. As Cornforth shows, those who cannot stomach the laws of historical development discovered by Marx are in reality those who have a stake in keeping the capitalist system. Cornforth's book deserves close study because he not only disposes of academic critics like Popper, but also contributes much thought-provoking material in the course of examining afresh many questions of increasing importance today.

CLEMENS DUTT

Reminiscences of the Cuban Revolutionary War

Che Guevara

Allen & Unwin, 288 pp., 42s.

LONG BEFORE HIS MURDER by a CIA-led unit of the Bolivian army, Che Guevara had passed into legend as a fighter and a revolutionary. It is ironic that this giant of a man who was declared unfit for military service in the Argentinian army should have proved himself a genius not only in the art of commanding other men but in his ability to endure the rigours which are the lot of the guerrilla fighter.

His *Reminiscences of the Cuban Revolutionary War* sheds considerable light on how this was done. It was not only physical stubbornness in the light of severe handicaps ('weary lungs' and 'shaky legs') which sustained him; he was generated by a warmth, a humanity, a devotion and, above all, by the complete subordination of self to the cause which fired him.

'Other nations of the world call for my modest efforts.' With these words written to Fidel Castro in April 1965 this Argentinian who had already done battle in Guatemala and then in Cuba went to meet his death in Bolivia. Not for him what some may regard as the

well-earned relaxation of public office. This he renounced and, as he put it in his final letter to his parents, 'Once more I hit the road with my shield upon my arm.' The world press placed him in a dozen fighting zones and all these reports seemed credible, for Che, the universal man—'one of those who risks his skin to prove his platitudes'—could have been doing battle on the side of the people anywhere.

More than any document I have read Che's *Reminiscences* serve to deflate romantic illusions about the nature of guerrilla struggle. When he playfully refers to himself as an 'adventurer' and a 'little soldier of fortune of the twentieth century' it is against the background of a self-effacing and understated narrative in which the nobility, heroism, dedication and devotion of the participants co-exists with a life of hunger, filth, fear and indescribable deprivation. We read not only of the heroes but of the many who could not last the pace and of some who gave up and turned traitor.

Unlike some of his followers Che does not in this account disparage the role of theory. Yet he does not here detail anything of the political training

organised for the guerrillas, and there is little inkling of any theory behind the political ferment that fired the forces of the July 26 movement. Another gap relates to the state of organisation and political awareness of the peasants and urban workers. Whatever set of circumstances combined to give the Cuban people their victory, there can surely be little doubt that the reception which the twelve survivors of the Granma and

later recruits received from the people must be partly connected with ideological and organising work which had been carried out in the decades before the armed struggle began.

But then Che's book is not intended to be anything more than scattered recollections of some of the highlights of the Cuban revolutionary war and as such it is obligatory and inspiring reading.

JOE SLOVO

Commitment to Welfare

Richard M. Titmuss

Allen & Unwin, 272 pp., 30s.

THIS IS A COLLECTION of 21 essays and lectures most of which had been published in the specialist journals. The whole is divided more or less evenly among four main subjects—university administration, health and welfare, the problems of redistribution inherent in social policy, and the dilemmas of medical care. Inevitably in such a collection there is (as Professor Titmuss himself agrees) some element of overlapping; but I would not hold this to be matter for criticism. There are a number of points that bear repetition in diverse contexts.

I never find it possible to read Titmuss without sympathy. He was not, of course the architect of the new model of Social Services, that have grown up since the last war. But for the past twenty years he has assumed the role of its philosopher, and that of the expanding and progressive system it was originally intended to be. The fact that it has not progressed along its logical lines was not his fault. His talent now lies in his ability to pose awkward questions for the politicians, economists and political theorists of the day. For example (p. 157): 'Will economic growth in a

competitive market situation result in fair shares for all in proportionate terms, with social policy performing a role in the economy similar to the one it plays now? . . . As we become richer, do we become more equal? . . . Will a doubling of the real income of the poor as well as the rich in X years (if it should take place) make possible a progressive decline in the role of social welfare? . . . Can the market as an economic system resolve the problems of ethnic integration and accommodation? This is an important question now for Britain as well as for the United States.'

On the criteria that should govern the distribution of social benefits Titmuss is tolerably explicit. Thus on p. 129 he speaks of 'the aim of making services available and accessible to the whole population in such ways as would not involve users in any humiliating loss of status, dignity or self-respect. There should be no sense of inferiority, pauperism shame or stigma in the use of a publicly provided service.' Continuing he quotes with approval from an economist. 'The sin unforgiveable (i.e. to right-thinking economists) was the waste of human resources; welfare was summoned to prevent waste. Hence the beginnings of four of our present-day universalist social services: retirement

pensions, the Health Service, unemployment insurance and the school meals service.'

But he is partly aware that, though he approaches the basic problem, he does not come fully to grips with it. Perhaps he is not theoretically equipped to do so. He writes (p. 122): 'The fundamental ideological issues of socialist social policies and the private market are not discussed here . . . The challenge that faces us is not the choice between universalist and selective services. The real challenge resides in the question: what particular infrastructure of universalist services is needed in order to provide the framework of values . . . within and around which can be developed acceptable

selective services . . . not dependent on *individual tests of need*.' We need not trouble ourselves that honest sociologists like Titmuss and several of his colleagues refrain from taking the ultimate step in their argument. Have we not been told many times by the Masters of Marxism that the paths towards Socialism are devious and complex, not industrial alone but educational, literary and in the whole sphere of the welfare and health services? The book contributes, in short, by impelling its readers (mainly no doubt of the welfare and educational professions) just a little closer to the awareness that it is the economic 'infrastructure' they will have first to transform. F. LE GROS CLARK

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Official Report Facsimile Reproduction
Communist Party, 72 pp., 15s.

AN INVALUABLE REPRODUCTION, not only for the historian, but for all in the labour and socialist movement who will find it of keen current

interest to see how questions which are still vexing us today were ardently thrashed out half a century ago. It is a pleasure to have the record of the participation of our ever young Bob Stewart, as well as of a joint founder and continuing active member of the Editorial Board of this magazine. R. Page Arnot.

PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED

Karl Marx, Founder of Modern Communism, Arnold Kettle. Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 126 pp., 12s. 6d.

The Legislative Process in Great Britain, S. A. Walker. Allen & Unwin, 110 pp., 25s.

History of the Communist Party of Great Britain, Volume 1, 1919-1924, James Klugmann. Lawrence & Wishart, 382 pp., 63s.

Writers and Partisans, James Burkhart Gilbert. John Wiley & Sons, 304 pp., 66s.

The Moscow Negotiations 1939, Lord Strang. Leeds University Press, 24 pp., 2s. 6d.

Dollar's Downfall and Gold Rush, Mohit Sen. Communist Party of India, 34 pp.

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